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THE HISTORY & HISTORIANS OF BRITISH INDIA

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*(Srimant Sayaji Rao Lectures
delivered at B.rod. in 1938).*

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The History AND Historians of British India

By
SIR SHAFAT AHMAD KHAN, Kt., Litt. D.

*Srimant Sayaji Rao Lectures
Delivered at Baroda in 1938.*

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The History

and

Historians of British India

Lecture I (1600—1756)

Your Highness, Ladies and Gentlemen;

Before I begin my lecture, let me take this opportunity of thanking the authorities of the Baroda Darbar for the honour they have conferred upon me by electing me a lecturer on the Shrimant Sayaji Rao Foundation. I regard this as the greatest honour which I have received so far and I will treasure it as an indication of the humble services I have tried to render in the realm of scholarship. Baroda has consistently maintained its well-deserved reputation as a nursery of statesmen and scholars, and has trained a succession of brilliant men who have left a deep impression not only on the history of Baroda, but also on that of India. At a time when Indians were given

comparatively few opportunities for their solid gift, and could not secure positions that were commensurate with their ability and character, Baroda can justifiably point to a galaxy of talent which would do honour to any European state. There were men of vision and imagination whose self-assurance and self-confidence, combined with their infinite faith in the future of their state, inspired them in their noble efforts, and sustained them in their struggles. They mounted the ladder of fame and renown, and showed by their unexampled success, the strength and integrity of their faith in the intrinsic qualities of our people. Baroda was, to many of us in our youth, a trumpet-call to action and activity and a well of policy, and inspired many of our youngmen with a noble resolve to serve our motherland according to our capacity and ability. Baroda was, and has remained a source of inspiration in our humble endeavour, and its solid achievements have urged us on to fresh activity and renewed vigour and confidence. It was a refuge of some of our early pioneers and a sanctuary in which the rugged energy and fierce enthusiasm of our race were harnessed to constructive work and fruitful enterprise. Its gracious ruler has created a

✓ ✓ ✓ *map* (p. 41 51, 42, 33)
tradition of enlightened administration which has made Baroda a model state, and though events are moving in India with an epic majesty, and the country is pulsating with fresh energy and enthusiasm and every province in British India has many important measures in the offing, Baroda still maintains its inspiring leadership, and can point with legitimate pride to fruitful experiments in education and administration which behoves every province of British India to study and imitate. Our bonds of obligation to Baroda can never be dissolved. While political and economic storms in British India might seize and shake the four corners of our roofs, roaring like Leviathan in anger, Baroda remains the only constant element in a confused state, imparting elements of stability and experience at a time when everything is changing with kaleidoscopic rapidity. Our debt to its enlightened ruler whose long and devoted service forms a landmark in the history of India, is inestimable. As a humble and insignificant participant in the proceedings of the Round Table Conferences in London, I can testify to the depth, width and breadth of his statesmanship and patriotism, and the tact,

experience and ability of his Dewan, Sir T. V. Krishnamachari. The time for the appraisal of their work has not yet arrived; when their services are duly assessed by posterity, it will be found that they have deserved well of their state and of India. I hope I shall be forgiven for this digression. It is an inadequate expression of feelings which move every Indian, and I shall be failing in my duty if I did not voice them here.

The subject of my lecture today is History and Historians of British India. The canvass is so widely spread that it affords an endless opportunity for barren controversies and has numerous pitfalls for the unwary. It can be extended to include the entire history of an elaborate and complex organisation with an amplitude of detail that would only confuse and weary this distinguished audience. The object and scope of the lecture are limited to the historiography of British India, and my purpose here is to trace the evolution of historical works on British India, appraise their value and point out significant gaps in our knowledge of the period, and the interpretation of important events and programmes. It will be clear to anyone who has even a rudimentary knowledge of the subject that a lecture on such a topic, with its enormous

scope and great variety can neither be exhaustive nor definitive. It is an exceedingly brief sketch, and is written in the hope that it may encourage other scholars to fill in the outline attempted here. I have always been a great believer in scientific history and always felt that the essential task of a historian consists in the collection of material and its rigorous examination. When this task is satisfactorily discharged, he will be able to bring all the requisite qualities of dispassionate judgment and freedom from prejudice, to bear on the construction of his history. I have not attempted to cover every period, nor have I dealt with all parts of the subject on a uniform basis. The Maratha history has been deliberately left out, as the services rendered by Maratha scholars are known and appreciated by every scholar in India, and I feel that these scholars are better exponents of their researches than myself. Moreover, in dealing with different periods of British Indian history, I have confined myself to those aspects which needed investigation, and have left other aspects severely alone. The lectures must be *read* subject to these limitations.

James Grant Duff stated in his *History of the Marathas* (edition, 1826) that "the records

of the East India Company's governments in India are probably the best historical materials in the world". This statement needs some qualifications, but is true on the whole. One or two facts will substantiate the soundness of this observation. Though a distance of more than six thousand miles separated the Company's Directors from their servants in the East, the supervision and scrutiny of their servants' conduct was essential if the Company was to maintain its prosperity and pay "fat" dividends to the shareholders.

Government is impossible unless salutary checks are imposed on the idiosyncracies and vagaries of its servants. At the present time, the wireless, the aeroplane and the telephone have annihilated distance, and linked up India in a way which would have been a source of constant surprise and wonder to their forbears. The Directors made up this deficiency by instituting a system of supervision and scrutiny which is without a parallel in the history of the world. The only analogy which the XVIIth century Europe affords is the colonial system of France and Spain. France under Colbert perfected her mercantile system on principles which enthroned the absolute monarchy, and made her administrative machinery the most potent

instrument of a highly centralised state. Just as Colbert created a new governing class of administrators who virtually extinguished the old ruling families, Cornwallis and his successors founded a new class of Covenanted Servants who concentrated all power in their hands and eclipsed an effete and decayed aristocracy. The services in India have numerous points of contact with the French bureaucracy, and the Indian Magistrate and Collector of the present day has many points of contact with the French *Intendant* of the *Ancien Regime*, but the subject has not received the attention of students. Spain, too, dealt with her colonies in South America as a French seigneur would deal with his domain. The differences between the English and the French systems consisted in the fact that the French carried with them to Canada cargoes not merely of goods and chattels, but also of ideas, culture and civilisation. They transplanted France on a foreign soil, and the settlers were, and remained, French in the temper of their mind, the conception of their government and the technique of their administration. England in the seventeenth and a large part of the eighteenth century did not attempt a repetition

of the French experiment in India. She did this in new England and other parts of North America, where the Red Indians were uprooted and virgin forests cleared by pioneers who stood amidst a savage population like a rock of granite and hewed their way through dense forests and fierce tribes. The reasons are clear enough. The English never attempted to colonise India, nor did they aim at the establishment of their dominion in this land till the middle of the eighteenth century. Everyone knows Sir William Hunter's theory that Sir Josiah Childe was the first to conceive the idea of a British dominion in India. The passage quoted by him is torn from its context, and a construction is put upon an isolated sentence which is basically inconsistent with the whole trend of Childe's policy. Childe insisted on fortified factories, but he did not cry for the moon, as he knew to his cost that the Mughal Empire was too strongly established in India to be shaken by the miserably weak army of the company. The Directors aimed at security and tranquillity, and they rightly concluded that these were unattainable in a period of anarchy and confusion unless they were determined to repel such attacks through

fortified factories. They, therefore, aimed not at a dominion in India, but at fortified factories, so that they may be able to defend themselves when attacked by marauders and rebels. Their jealousy dictated full, tedious, and prolix explanations by correspondence. A despatch from the Company is a curious blend of taunt, jeers, sermons and reprimands. The President of the Settlement maintained a semi-regal state, and imitated Mughal splendour and brilliance with a curious blend of plebeian humility and aristocratic pride. He was constantly exposed to the back-biting and intrigues of members of his own Council, whose private letters to the Directors on the misdeeds of their Presidents, throw a lurid light on social relations in these settlements. The Directors' despatches were received with fear and apprehension, and no President was safe from the calumnies of his subordinates. The standard of public servants was low owing to the miserable level of their salaries, and though we come across persons whose pioneering work and ruthless energy carved out a solid and safe position for the Company in India, the average level hardly rose above mediocrity. The Directors laid down with wearisome

monotony their stringent directions, indulged in homely see-saws and uttered platitudes with unctuous piety. The volume of correspondence with their servants in the East reached enormous proportions. Council Government implied deliberation, discussion and debate, and the latter took curious forms in a number of settlements. Proposals were mostly made in written minutes, and the latter often provoked strong minutes of dissent. These were entered at length upon the records of Council meetings, and were termed Consultations or Proceedings. Copies of these proceedings were regularly sent to England, and were accompanied, in early days, by separate volumes containing all the letters received or sent. Later on, such correspondence was either entered on the Consultations or in cases of special importance transmitted as enclosures to despatches. As the Directors also kept full record of their proceedings, as well as of the committees appointed by them, the amount of material preserved in England and India for the study of the period is voluminous. A considerable proportion of this material was destroyed through neglect, and few attempts were made to preserve them with sedulous care. On March 26, 1771, a Record Department was established at the

East India House, and a "Register" and Keeper was appointed later on. I do not wish to trace the development of the Company's Record Office in London or its archives in India. The subject has been dealt with by Sir William Foster, late Registrar and Superintendent, Record Department, as well as by others.

The manuscript material for the study of British Indian history, preserved in the Records Departments of India, as well as in England, is enormous. In India itself there is an ever-increasing material dealing with almost every phase of the Company's activity. It is calculated that the India Office alone contains nearly forty thousand volumes in its Record office. It is an inspiring centre of research, and many historians have availed themselves of the facilities which are generously provided by the courteous and obliging Registrar of that Department. I may be permitted to refer to my work entitled *Sources for the History of XVIIth Century British India*, published in 1926, for further details of the material on XVIIth century British India.

I have deemed it necessary to refer briefly to MSS material on the history of India, as I

feel that without a dispassionate examination of material preserved in the English and Indian store houses, it would be impossible to construct a history of British India. However, I do not propose to deal with such a vast subject, because the scope of this lecture is limited to the history and historians of British India, and not with the raw material out of which history is constructed. Moreover, it is impossible for any one, however vast and encyclopaedic his knowledge may be, to discuss authoritatively the enormously wide range of manuscript material extending from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. I propose to confine myself to significant and indispensable works on the history of British India, and include in this category all printed works, whether they are works of travel, parliamentary papers, or solid historical treatises. I do not wish to give a catalogue of these works, nor can I discuss each authority in detail. All that is attempted here is a general account of authorities, and not criticisms of specific works. An analysis of these sources has been linked up with the salient features of each period, so far as seemed to me to be desirable and necessary. Some of the travellers such as Bernier were men of erudition and sound judgment whose

observations on the manners, customs and government of the country are marked by great originality and insight. There are, besides, a large number of pamphlets and other printed material scattered throughout the principal British archives which bring out vividly the intensity and extent of feelings held strongly by the imperious proconsuls who held the gorgeous Ind in fee.

Every school boy knows that the impulse which drove thousands of Englishmen to leave their native shores and seek adventures in foreign land was trade, and this was the prize for which the Dutch, the Portuguese and the English contended. The Portuguese had a start of a hundred years before either of the Protestant powers appeared on the scene, and this long period ought to have furnished an excellent opportunity to that country for the consolidation of its influence and extension of its dominions. It was no doubt a small nation, and lacked the resources of men and material of which a more powerful state could boast at the time. Spain had risen from her slumber of centuries and had presented to the world an example of rugged energy and pure fanaticism which reckoned little of opposition. Portugal possessed advantages

at the start which would have enabled a lesser power to play its part in the politics of Southern India. She had an experience and tradition of seamanship and navigation which few European powers enjoyed. Prince Henry the Navigator had given a brilliant lead to Europe, and his life was an epitome of the history of his nation. It led to the discovery of places whose existence was unheard of, and his example was followed by persons who combined the ardours of Crusaders with the subtlety and cunning of an Iberian. Yet, Portugal began to decline after Almeida's Viceroyalty, and by the middle of the 16th century had ceased to excite fear or rouse opposition and had become weak, disorganised and spiritless. The reasons for the rapid deterioration of their character are to be found in the curious mixture of piety and imperialism which they imported into the administration of their territories. They were poised midway, so to speak, between heaven and earth, and combined a burning zeal for their faith with a ruthless desire for domination in proportions which varied from time to time, and seriously disturbed their administration. They were never able to make up their minds whether they would elect to rule

as Crusaders, or prefer to act as imperial and imperious administrators. The love of the Church ultimately triumphed, and spurred on by the fanatical Portuguese kings, the authorities at Goa established the inquisition at Goa which worked havoc in the Portuguese empire, and ensured its decay. Their energy was sapped by the internecine quarrels and appallingly trivial intrigues in which the best minds of the administration seemed to be consumed. The capital became a ghost of its former self; public offices could be purchased; the bonds of discipline were loosened, and in the Goa of the 17th century, one could read depth beyond depth of passion and sadness, a blackness of despair, and a certain invincible content when she lay luxuriously folded on herself and sunk in pleasure and self-complacency. The Portuguese in the XVIIth century were the great buccaneers of Asia, and roamed about the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal with the agility and daring of their forbears. They lacked both a polity which could give unity and stability to their scattered energy, and an ideal which could inspire the descendants of Vasco Da Gama with the spiritual vigour and febrile energy of the early pioneers. One could easily

recognise the type in the reckless pirates and desperate seamen who worked havoc in the Bay of Bengal in the time of Shah Jahan, but the likeness was swallowed up in the difference. Their struggle with the Dutch and the English in the South Seas and the Indian Ocean completed the process which had been set in train in the middle of the XVIth century, and by the middle of the XVIIth, they had ceased to count in the Councils of the English or French traders. They continued to rule their small dependency, and watched with pathetic resignation the titanic conflict that went on between the two Protestant rivals. Portuguese Imperialism found its most brilliant exponent in Luiz de Camoen who took an active part in the conquest of the Algada Islands, when he helped the Rajah of Cochin against the ruler of Pimienta. Camoen is the great national poet of Portuguese Conquistadors in India and his *Lusiads* (1553) summarises the achievements of Portuguese conquerors in a language of suppressed vigour and classic purity. Camoen's picture of India is coloured by his national prejudices and crusading spirit, and his description of the Portuguese conflicts with the local Rajahs loses a substantial part of its importance by the far-fetched similes,

warm imagination, and poetic license in which he indulges with a singular disregard of facts. It is an epic of Portuguese conquest, and it infused into the scattered energy and drooping spirits of the declining empire, an element of hope and confidence. For a very brief period the *Lusiads* shook the very foundations of identity, and the Portuguese nation was carried on the crest of a national wave of Imperialism which removed all traces of their decline, and made them live in the golden era of Vasco Da Gama and Prince Henry the Navigator. But in the agonised womb of consciousness, the two periods—the one ideal, and the other actual—were incessantly struggling, and the *Lusiads* remained a symbolical representation of the severe trials and bizarre achievements of a gallant but unbalanced nation in the East. Let us now deal with the prosaic and sober narratives of the period. The Portuguese have preserved their national monuments with greater care and attention than other nations, and Mr. Danvers had obtained transcripts from some of the archives in Lisbon in 1891-2. They are based on the series known as Books of the Monsoon as well as on others. The Portuguese archives have also published in full earlier volumes of this

series. I do not wish to deal at length with the details of Portuguese archives, as they will be found in the admirable works of Danvers and others. The authorities on the subject are varied. There are some of particular significance to the student as early Portuguese Governors left copious accounts of their achievements, and commentaries and biographies which are indispensable to the student. The Hakluyt Society deserves the thanks of all historians for the variety, volume and scope of its investigations into Portuguese history. The vigorous personality of Albuquerque may be studied in his *Commentaries* while Vasco Da Gama's *Journal* of the first voyage shows how insular, prejudiced and warped was the mentality and outlook of the early Portuguese. They imported their fixed ideas of Christianity into the interpretation of Indian customs, religions and rites. Portuguese histories were written in a vein of pronounced racialism, but their mistakes can be corrected by works in Persian and Arabic which covered the same ground. *The Mirat-i-Ahmadi* and the *Mirat-i-Sikandari* are useful while the *Arabic History of Gujrat* and the *Tuhfatul Mujahedeen*, supply us with information on the History of Gujrat in which the glowing accounts

of Portuguese annalists are corrected by the comparatively sober and candid version of these writers. I cannot give a catalogue of authorities in this lecture, nor is it possible for me to deal adequately with this enormous mass without exposing myself to the risk of monotony. My observations, here as elsewhere, will be general and they will deal with movements which claim the attention of scientific historians. The patient labours of scholars have placed at the disposal of English-speaking people some of the most important works on Portuguese India, and the translations of Du Jarric, Monserrate, Duarte, Barbosa and Albuquerque have thrown a flood of light on Portuguese relations with India. A great deal of work, however, remains to be done by scholars, and it is hoped that in the rebirth of the Indian people, when the dormant energy of our race is concentrated on the reconstruction of our history it will be fittingly expressed in reorientation of Portuguese relations with India. There are a number of important works in Portuguese which await the labours of a patient scholar. The works of P. L. Cabral, Jao De Barros, Gasper Correa, Couto Godinho, Guerreiro and others need a band of scholars who are equipped by training, and inspired by enthusiasm

for their task. The contribution of the Portuguese to Indian culture should not be measured by the extent of their possession in India, or the duration of their political influence. It should be assessed in terms of culture and civilisation and its social and economic results should be carefully appraised. The Portuguese were free from the tinge of prejudice and pride, and Albuquerque was the first to advise the inter-marriage of Portuguese and Indians. The object, of course, was political, as the Portuguese needed a strong body of men to garrison forts, swell the ranks of their army and navy, and help them in conquering the neighbouring provinces. The experiment failed, as it was bound to fail, and thereby the fate of the Portuguese Empire in India was sealed. It reached a state of appalling stagnation and lassitude, and it was with considerable difficulty that they retained their few struggling settlements with senile tenacity. Their contributions to Indian civilisation are solid and substantial. They enriched the Indian vocabulary by introducing new words; they introduced new methods of warfare among Indian princes and nobles, and their gunners in the service of Indian rulers were conspicuous for their gallantry and devotion to duty. Many

Portuguese adventurers continued to serve Indian sovereigns, but the glory of their Empire had departed, and Goa in the 17th century resembled a body from which the aura and effulgence of certain powers that made up the Portuguese spirit had been dethroned from their supremacy, and another spirit substituted which was the expression, and bore the stamp of langour and passivity.

Let me refer here briefly to the Dutch in India. Colombo and Madras have published most useful selections from the records of the Dutch in India and Ceylon, but the work to be done is enormous. In the Colombo Record Office alone, there are 3000 volumes of "General Records", and 700 volumes of the proceedings of the Council. Besides the Madras and India Office Records, which contain a large and useful collection of material, in the Ricksarchief at the Hague are preserved an extremely fine collection of records which have not yet been effectively tapped. Very few of the standard works in Dutch have been translated into English, and the gap in our knowledge of the organisation and powers of the Dutch Company has not yet been filled. It is a curious phenomenon in the history of scholarship that greater attention

should be felt for the achievements of Portuguese pioneers whose contribution to the development of joint-stock organisation was comparatively small. The main reason is to be found in the fundamental differences in their outlook and objective. The Portuguese came both as conquerors and crusaders, and their undertakings in India were watched with the deepest interest by southern India. The Dutch, on the other hand, had severely practical aims in view. They clung to their grand commercial design with a tenacity and doggedness which resulted in the conquest of many of the spice islands, and the subjugation of Bantam and other places in Java. Their chief aim was trade, and they concentrated on the monopoly of trade in spices which was bound to yield the largest profit to their company. The objects of the English traders were precisely the same and both nations remained steadfast in the pursuit of their aim for more than a century. But the methods of the two Protestant powers were different. The monopoly of spices could not be secured without the acquisition of political power, and the conflict of interest between the English and the Dutch in the South Seas soon emerged with a terrible significance. Had the

Dutch been worsted in the warfare in the South Seas, the English might have concentrated on the conquest of these islands as the Dutch actually did in the seventeenth century, and might have remained completely aloof from the ebb and flow of Indian politics. But the Dutch were determined to exclude all foreigners with ruthless energy and fierce encounters took place on many a savage island in the South Seas between the two great races which had fought shoulder to shoulder in a holy war against Spanish fury. The Dutch triumphs in these regions were the result of careful organisation and clear thinking. As the English traders had been driven from the South Seas, and were desirous of carrying on their trade along the India Coast, they conserved their resources for an intensive effort in India. Amboyna had shown to the shrewd and practical merchants in London the need for a realistic and clear policy. It was followed by domestic disturbances in England and this gave the Dutch a start of thirty years in Java and other places. Had the English been able to repel Dutch attacks with vigour, the conflict in the South Seas might have been prolonged, and the two naval powers might have frittered away their energy in mutual destruction in the numerous

small and large islands which are infinitely difficult to reach. A desperate conflict between great naval powers in regions where a powerful navy can be easily destroyed by skilful seamanship would have been suicidal to both. Neither would have been able to organise effective administration in any major region. Portugal had traversed these regions, and a century of varied and chequered existence had given her sailors certain positive advantages which a new comer might well envy. But the Portuguese navy had decayed and it was not a match for Dutch sailors whose noble resistance to Spanish opposition had roused the latent energy of a stubborn race. The Dutch were able to sweep the South Seas and establish a network of fortified factories in strategic places which defied the might of the Portuguese empire, and tamed the most powerful rulers of these islands into subjection. The supremacy of the Dutch was a reality, and upon this commercial supremacy was grafted a species of administration which was saturated through and through with mercantilism. If any one wishes to study the logical development of mercantile doctrine and practice, let him study the methods and principles of Dutch administration in Java and

other places. The Empire which Dutch vigour had carved out amidst the luxuriant vegetation and drooping climate of these islands was based upon monopoly of a type whose rigour and severity have rarely been paralleled in Asia. Batavia conducted its administration on the principles of the counting house and dividends regulated the inception and execution of policy. Affections, like ivy, are the growth of time, and imply no aptness in the object. The Dutch control of islands inevitably led to fortified factories, and the latter produced a commercial empire by the inexorable logic of events. The ideal of the Dutch was avowedly mercantilist, and profit and loss became the sole considerations in Dutch designs on India. The Dutch factors caught the infection, and private trade among Dutch seamen, as among English and Portuguese, reached appalling proportions. The huge cumbrous machinery of the Dutch Company with its intense centralisation soon decayed. All vitality had gone out of the body, and corruption was rampant. The Commissions sent from the Hague accomplished little, and the Dutch in India were content to remain as traders and merchants. There is something pathetic in the urge which focussed

Dutch energy on dividends, and we miss the formative principles and practical idealism which lift the English Despatches of Directors above the level of the commonplace. The calculated phlegm and self-complacency of the Dutch Company, their political impotence in India, and commercial omnipotence in the South Seas, reduced the Dutch in India to the position of mere traders and merchants, and prepared the way for Anglo-French conflict in the eighteenth century. Of all the European nations in India, the Dutch at that time wielded enormous influence and had they not concentrated on commercial monopoly and changed their methods in their dealings with Indians, they might have built up considerable influence in strategic places on the sprawling coastline of India. They shrank instinctively from undertakings which might embroil them in political commitments, and received their reward in the oblivion and insignificance which reduced them to a third-rate power in Europe. Of all the European nations who founded their settlements in India, the Dutch were the only people who produced no influence on Indian thought and life. They confined themselves to their counting houses, and would sit for hours in

unobtrusive company, practising a political isolation, sobering their minds in rich silence, and contrasting their happy mercantile existence with the tempestuous life of their European neighbours. The eighteenth century witnessed the eclipse of their state, and Holland subsided into a faithful follower of England throughout her wars with France. The Dutch contribution to Indian progress is scanty. Their chief merit, which was the main cause of their success, consisted in their organisation. Though both the English and the Dutch Companies were modelled on the joint stock, the English Company did not receive strong support from their sovereigns till 1660. The Dutch were the first to mobilise all the powers of the state for the attainment of their grand design. Their Company was an extension and development of their state, and in all their representations and protests, the Dutch Ambassadors took an active and direct part. The English Company suffered considerably from this drawback, and had to placate its eccentric and vacillating kings, James I and Charles I, before it could be assured of success. By the organisation of their administration in Batavia, and the development of their resources, they

evolved a form of company management at the Hague which was admirably fitted for the new task, and their Company discharged its limited task with comparative success. This aspect has not yet received sufficient attention, though I pointed it out nearly 16 years ago. Further research confirms the view which I then propounded, and tends to strengthen the opinion that the supremacy of the Dutch in South Seas and their conflict with the English was due partly to their naval superiority and partly to the effective organisation of their Company. The one concentrated the enormous resources of a revived and rejuvenated state, pulsating with enthusiasm, and intent on commercial domination, while the other was torn by domestic broils, and lacked both a flexible machinery for adjustment to changing circumstances and sufficient influence to enlist the support of its kings on its behalf. These remarks are confined to the period 1600-1660.

The East India Company in the XVIIth Century.—Compared with the activities and influence of the Dutch Company, the English Company started with incomplete organisation, insufficient capital and inadequate support. Their organisation was not fully developed till

experience had pointed to the need of radical modifications. By a process of trial and error they succeeded in consolidating their position in the reign of Charles II and giving to their organisation an element of integrity and energy which had hitherto been lacking. The East India Trade was the principal motive of the new enterprise, and this conception influenced their negotiations with the country powers, their commercial transactions with Indian merchants, and their policy and behaviour in their relations with the Moghuls. They had come as mere traders and remained so for nearly a century and a half. There was no deviation from this policy. This did not imply meek submission to insults, nor ~~did~~ it involve pathetic resignation to the lot of a defenceless trader. Sir Josiah Childe foresaw a period of disaster and confusion in parts of India owing to the stirrings of Mahratta nationalism and the determination of other races and religions in India to express their individuality and assert their freedom. The moral prestige of the central government had been shattered by the brilliance of Sivaji and the uprising of the Mahratta people. The revival of Mahratta nationalism was not yet sufficiently strong to induce the English mer-

chants to make a violent departure from their policy of neutrality. Such a change in the XVIIth century would have involved total exclusion of the Company from India. The shrewd and lynx-eyed Directors were realists, who knew that the central government in India was too strong to be shaken by a few battalions imported from England. They had rashly engaged themselves in hostilities with Aurangzeb, and their experience of the short and sharp conflict had convinced them of the soundness of their old policy. Increasing anarchy and general disorder, which swept over parts of the Deccan with tremendous velocity made it imperative to protect themselves against unprovoked assaults. This is the explanation of Sir Josiah Childe's resolve on fortified factories. He advocated them solely with a view to defence against the attacks of marauders, and not as part of a comprehensive scheme for the conquest of India. Throughout the seventeenth century, the English continued to advance slowly but steadily. For the first sixty years their progress was necessarily slow. They were feeling their way and were constantly hampered by incompetent factors in India, and domestic strife at home. The records of their

activity has been preserved in a series of luminous works which are at once the glory and pride of English scholarship. Nobody has rendered greater service to a true interpretation of this period than Sir William Foster. His monumental work on *English Factories in India*, and *Court Minutes of the East India Company* and other works which include more than forty volumes are a model of solid research. They have all the qualities of scientific history, and historians of British India have freely drawn on them. Sir William Foster's example has been followed by others, and we have now a very copious, thorough and dispassionate analysis of the chief movements in the history of the Company in the XVIIth century. The works of Sir George Birdwood, Strachey, Yule, Sir Richard Temple, Hunter, Love, Macpherson, John Bruce, Rawlinson and Moreland are familiar to the historians of the period; and I will not weary this audience by a bare recital of a catalogue of books and pamphlets. I will content myself with pointing out the lacunæ in our knowledge of the period, and suggesting possible lines of inquiry. Sir Josiah Childe was a dominating figure in the Council of Directors from 1677 down to about the end of the XVIIth

century. His vigorous personality is clearly revealed in his forceful despatches to the Company in the East, while his freedom from the trammels of narrow mercantilism and parochial economic outlook is stamped on almost every page of his *New Discourse of Trade*. It is the clearest exposition of the new doctrines which Childe worked out in his administration of the Company. A full length biography of this dictator is a desideratum, and it is to be hoped that some brilliant scholar will piece together the scattered material which is to be found in many English libraries. Again, Sir George Downing's negotiations with the Dutch on behalf of the East India Company have not yet received serious attention. The Public Record Office contains an excellent collection of these despatches. Extracts from Downing's despatches are being published by me in the *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, held at Allahabad in 1938, and in *Islamic Culture*, Hyderabad (Deccan), in the course of this year. We lack, too, the details of the working of many of the Company's factories in India. Colonel Love's *Vestiges of Old Madras* rendered inestimable service to students of the period, while records of the Surat factory and some

Bengal factories have been utilised by Anderson, Yule and others. I may here refer to the account of Patna by John Marshall, a Company's factor in Patna, published by me in 1926. We should have monographs on other settlements by experts on the periods. The finances of the Company have been exhaustively treated by Professor Scott in his *History of the Constitution and Finances of Joint Stock Companies*, but the material on the subject is enormous, and a skilful investigator could reconstruct the financial history of the East India Company between 1720-1773. European travellers should not be ignored, though their views, as distinct from their description, should be studied with great caution. Bernier, Tavernier, Manucci and others are so well-known, that I need not refer to them here. We have not yet fully utilised the accounts of India by French and Dutch travellers, and other Europeans who visited India during this period. Hamilton and Fryer in the latter half of the century are good, but Hamilton was prejudiced, and his garbled facts and figures should not be regarded as a safe authority. Some of the French travellers were men of great erudition and culture, and their observations on the govern-

ment and administration of the country are penetrating and shrewd. While we have translations of a few of these works, there are others which await a capable translator.

Having dealt briefly with the authorities for the period, let me refer to some of the problems of XVIIth century British India. The Company devoted special attention to Indian industries and the Directors were never tired of impressing upon their subordinates the necessity of fostering local enterprise. Indian silk goods, calicoes and other goods acquired an ascendancy in England which, according to the opponents of the Company threatened to sap the foundations of British trade. The competition of Indian goods with English products was severely felt in England, and gave rise to debates in the House of Commons. The position which Lancashire occupied in the 19th century was reversed, and the Company sent English weavers to Bombay and Bengal to teach Indians improved designs and better craftsmanship. This was a clear and irrefutable argument against the rigid principles of Economics which found favour among the ruling classes in England, and the Company was subjected to a barrage of criticisms which

nearly shook it to its foundation : Sir Josiah Childe was mobbed and the Directors were insulted. No historian has pointed out the significance of these events, and its pervasive influence on the mercantile theory of the period. What Adam Smith preached with so much eloquence and judgment nearly eighty years later had been borne in upon the Directors in the actual, day-to-day administration of their network of factories. In India itself, the factors were content to secure the choicest specimens of Indian craftsmanship, and dispose of British goods as best they could. Their social life inside the factories partook of the character of a hostel, and was regulated by a series of rules which were stringently enforced. They imbibed Indian customs and manners almost unconsciously, and their food, wines, ceremonies, the splendour of their equipage, and the magnificence of their retinue were closely modelled upon the Moghuls. Most of the familiar Moghul dishes appeared on the table, and the elaborate ceremonial in which their Presidents indulged when on their rounds, was a reminder to the people of India of the pervasive influence of the Mughal tradition. In the eighteenth century social infiltration proceeded

apace, and the *hookah* was as familiar a sight in the Government House at Calcutta as the *hookah burdar*. Social barriers did not exist in the eighteenth century, and the intercourse between the two races was cordial and enthusiastic. Bombay witnessed the inauguration of the first judiciary in India, and its great President Aungier delivered a historic speech which has been reproduced in my *Anglo-Portuguese Negotiations*. Sir Charles Fawcett has recently published a work on the subject and dealt exhaustively with his judicial reforms. Madras was fortunate in its corporation and the germs of local self-governing institutions in India are to be found in the bold experiment which the Directors initiated. Bengal came later, as Charnock was not able to return to his beloved city till 1690. Charnock is an elusive figure in Indian History. He has been regarded as a hero by a long line of British historians, and the faults in his character which Hamilton delineated with gross exaggeration have been explained away by persons whose zeal outruns their intelligence. Charnock illustrates in his person a type that was common in parts of India. His long residence in the mufassil had developed eccentricities

which did not harmonise with the habits and customs of Calcutta. Charnock was one of these strange, eccentric individuals whose long residence in a mufassil town had made them queer, irritable and moody. A secretive temperament was allied with a doggedness which left its mark on his conflicts with the Mughals, and his struggle for the foundation of Calcutta. Nor should his adoption of Indian customs and his marriage to a Hindu widow surprise us. The mode of life of many a servant in the Company resembled, in some respects, that of the Indian noblemen and princes, and the numerous European adventurers in the armies of Mahrattas, Sikhs and others effected a strange amalgam of Indian and European customs. We come across numerous cases of distinctive characters whose absorption in their duties crystallised into habits which were out of harmony with the polished society and cultured atmosphere of Calcutta. Charnock was one of these men, and his adoption of Indian customs to which exception is taken by historians, should not detract from his character. Hamilton's account exaggerates his eccentricities but it contained a substratum of truth. We are not surprised to

hear that Charnock had married an Indian widow when we know that several leading Europeans did so, and no serious objection seem to have been taken by the public opinion of the day. Calcutta came late into the field, but she easily outstripped other Presidencies and became the headquarters of the Company. Wilson's *Early Annals of Bengal* has dealt with the rise of Fort William in Bengal and the *Surman Embassy* is minutely described. It is sometimes asserted by historians that India was plunged into the horrors of anarchy and confusion immediately after the death of Aurangzeb. There is little justification for this view. That there was a violent break with the Central Government in the Deccan and other parts of Southern India is perfectly true, but the intensity and extent of these changes varied with the distance from Delhi. The Mughal name and prestige continued to arouse respect in the remotest parts of India, and Dupleix was the first to conceive the idea of holding his jagir from the Mughal Emperor imparting thereby a veneer of legality and validity to his designs. Clive was shrewd enough to act on this principle and his common sense and experience dictated the payment of a substantial

sum to Emperor Shah Alam. Lord Hastings tried to lower the prestige and depress the status of Mughal Emperor and suggested to the Nawab Vizier of Oudh that he could assume title of King with impunity. The suggestion was promptly accepted, but it neither lessened the veneration and respect in which the Emperor was held, nor did it enhance the prestige of the new title. On the whole it will be safe to say that the emblem of the Mughal Government, and the insignia of Mughal sovereignty continued to exercise sway over the minds of people of northern India till Shah Alam's removal to Delhi. Though the institutions which a long line of vigorous rulers created had become effete and lifeless, they remained the mould into which later reforms under the aegis of the Company were cast. The Mughal Secretariat has hitherto received little attention, but the elaborate procedure adopted by the Mughal treasury in examining the demands of the Surman Embassy for trading rights shows clearly that the Government exercised rigid and meticulous control over the grant of farmans etc. The formalities necessary for the validity of grants were generally insisted upon and the huge unwieldy machine, which had become effete and lifeless

continued to function for nearly forty years with regularity. The Mughal systems of revenue, judiciary and police remained in operation for a considerable time, in a large part of northern India, and were modified and adapted by the British and other races who supplanted them. There were few structural changes in the basic principles of the old system and under the British revenue administration which was a perennial source of trouble to Warren Hastings and others was conducted on principles which had been clearly enunciated by Mughal administrators.

William Irvine's work on the later Mughals supplemented by the brilliant researches of Sir Jadunath Sarkar deserves high praise, and Indian scholars are under a deep debt of gratitude to Irvine for his thorough and painstaking studies of the rulers of the period. The history of the dissolution of the Empire and deterioration in the character of the degenerate successors of the great Akbar evokes little enthusiasm, and we must dismiss the painful history of the decadent successors of the mighty Baber with regret, mixed with contempt. We bid adieu to the comparative youth, the light step, the leaping pulses and volcanic energy of

the early Mughals, and in the shapely bodies and fair faces, the singular unity of look, in the common features and common bearing of their decendants, we realise the miracle of the continued race, and illustrate the parable of royalty in tatters. Here is a picture of emperor Shah Alam culled from Kaye's *Life of Metcalfe* "The emperor Shah Alam, old, blind and infirm, still held the mockery of a court. The victories of the British army on the banks of the Jamna had rescued him from the thraldom of the Mahrathas to impose upon him another yoke. In our hands he was as helpless, but less miserable. He was at the mercy of men who respected his fallen fortunes and desired that he should enjoy as much of the luxury and pomp of royalty as could be purchased for a certain sum of money to be appropriated to him out of the revenues of our new possessions." The domestic life of the later Mughals, as gleaned from the reports of British Residents at Delhi from the beginning of the nineteenth century was one long tale of palace intrigues, penury and imbecility. It is not redeemed by a single act of chivalry or prudence by any Mughal ruler after the death of Jahandar Shah, and Shah Alam's inglorious reign extinguished the candle which

Baber had lighted. No, I will not advise any young man to wade through the chapter of vices and failures which overwhelmed the dying empire. While the later Mughals arouse only contempt it is necessary that the chief Mughal institutions should be carefully studied in their operation in northern India. It is a mistake to suppose that the administrative arrangements which the Mughals had perfected for a century and a half fell to pieces immediately after the death of Aurangzeb. Ali Vardi Khan carried on the administration of Bengal with rigorous impartiality and fidelity to the basic ideas of the Mughals which aroused the admiration of many foreigners. We have yet to tap the enormous resources of our archives for an elucidation of these views, but the voluminous material which Warren Hastings' laborious inquiries, and Cornwallis' patient studies amassed show conclusively that the structure of the Mughal revenue system had remained unimpaired. Inroads had undoubtedly been made on the rights of the peasants; the Zemindars had emerged in the full panoply of their power, and the miserable raiyat was saddled with a load of abwabs and cesses which would have crushed the spirit of the stoutest. The machine

worked clumsily and had become rusty, but the hierarchy of village officials who had entrenched themselves in their fastnesses had become too powerful to be dislodged. No new system could be transplanted in the country, and the old system, with all its faults, was readjusted to suit new conditions. Oudh was in an exceptional condition owing to the constant intervention of the Company's servants in its domestic affairs, but in other parts such as the United Provinces and the Punjab, the framework was essentially Mughal. We need detailed studies on the administration of this period. The controversy over the Permanent Settlement in Bengal yielded a rich harvest, and all sorts of farmans, grants, *nishans* etc. were hunted out and collated. The Fifth Report as well as the Parliamentary Reports of the Select Committee and the Committee of Secrecy of 1772, are also indispensable to the student of the period. The material must be pieced together from various sources, but the quantity is enormous, and I have no doubt that more students will turn to the study of institutions and administration in the eighteenth century when they know how rich is the reward of labours in a virgin field. The conception of

eighteenth century India as an unfortunate land involved in the throes of anarchy and disorder must be modified in the light of our knowledge of this material. If we concentrate on administration and ignore the meteoric rise and appalling collapse of dynasties, the ambitions and vagaries of usurpers and condottieri in northern India, we note a continuity of policy, and a unity of outlook which afford a safe clue to the perplexities of the student. While kings and kinglets rose and fell, the administration went on functioning, and the villagers carried on with their daily rounds under a system to which their ancestors had been accustomed for centuries. The central government lost its grip and vitality, but the district machinery had sufficient momentum to work clumsily for several decades. Sir William Hunter gave a pen-picture of a *Muffasil* town in Bengal in his *Annals of Rural Bengal*. Could we not paint, however unskillfully, a picture of our countryside in the days of turmoil which would photograph the sentiments and aspirations of countless millions? The original material on the subject is vast, and Irvine's patient industry unearthed manuscripts which had been relegated to the dusty

corners of private libraries. But the history of the people of India in the XVIIIth century awaits a band of workers.

Having dealt with the history of the later Mughals, *let me now deal with the British period.*

The subject offers unlimited field for investigation, and inquiry, but it bristles with controversies and has been exploited by passionate partisans who are determined to prove their case. History has been converted into an arena for party polemics, and racial animosity has been fanned by works tinged with a pronounced political bias. The Anglo-French conflict in the Deccan assumes its true position only in the light of its repercussions on other theatres of war. Dupleix need not detain us long, as the struggle between the two European nations ended in the virtual expulsion of the French from India. It had little visible effect on the destiny of India, which was moulded by the struggle between the country powers and the Company in Bengal and Madras. The quaint phraseology of Robert Orme, whose classical *Military Transaction of the British Nation in Indostan*, published in August 1769, familiarised Englishmen with the conflict of the two

nations in India, has produced an undue and exaggerated idea of this conflict. It is true that the English were obliged to drop their doctrine of neutrality in the South, and the logic of events forced them to take an active part in the politics of India. But it was not part of a comprehensive scheme of conquest framed by the ambition or vanity of a military power, but a measure of defence dictated alike by the instinct of self-preservation and by the desire to prevent their rivals, the French, from establishing a permanent footing at the courts of Indian princes. The immediate gains to the British in the Deccan were insubstantial, but the moral effect of checkmating French designs, and thwarting Dupleix's scheme of a French Empire, was overwhelming. Again, there was no thought of the conquest of Bengal at the time. Dupleix's vivid and warm imagination had conjured up visions of a formal grant of extensive tracts to the French by Shah Alam; but the commonsense no less than the sound experience of the English decisively rejected this plan. Dupleix's failure was due precisely to his precipitancy and boundless ambition. Had he concentrated all his resources on a limited objective, he might have been able to

retain the Carnatic, and the capture of Trichinopoly would not have been a difficult undertaking. But he was rarely in a position to execute even one-fourth of his schemes and, as he has dispersed his forces over an enormous area, he could not bring effective strength to bear upon any vital point. Had he built up his position steadily, step by step, and never advanced further until he had consolidated his conquests he might have left a considerable heritage to his nation. But he wished to overleap the barriers of centuries in a few years, and when he fell his grandiose projects toppled down like a house of cards. He lacked the patience, resource and tenacity of a trained administrator. The treatment meted out to him by the French Company was undoubtedly harsh, though it must be admitted that Dupleix had not been fair to his employers and had deliberately delayed the communication of his ambitious projects to his employers. Bussy was better fitted to deal with situations in which tact, good humour and resources were needed, and his work in the Deccan has not yet been adequately dealt with by any English historian. The archives of some Indian States contain a very large collection of material on

the subject, and are bound to yield a rich harvest to students of the history of the Deccan. No scholar has dealt adequately with the extent of French influence in southern India, nor have the contributions of Frenchmen to the improvement in the technique, equipment, and discipline of Indian armies, been properly assessed. The recall of Dupleix did not mean the end of French influence. The Seven Years' War precipitated another conflict between the two nations, while French influence in Mysore under Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan and Hyderabad under Bussy and Raymond await intensive analysis and research.

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Lecture II (1757-1937)

The English in Bengal. We now deal with a subject wherein passion, prejudice and interest have exercised a baneful influence on the study and writing of Indian History. We have the chronicles and annals composed by persons who had taken an active part in the campaigns or in the administration, and the pages of the early histories of the period, written by Orme, Holwell, Vansittart and a host of other writers glow with the first springtide of a heroic adventure. We have natures rich in many capacities and gifted with every kind of sensibility. In times of anarchy and confusion, there is no limit to the play of personality in action, and Northern India in the eighteenth century was in the throes of appalling confusion and internecine warfare. It is impossible to deal adequately with a period in which men of courage and resource opened their eyes for the first time on a world of wonder and magnificence, when their fresh senses rendered them keenly sensitive to the romance of the land and the confusion of its government, when heroic virtues and dauntless valour went hand in hand with consuming egotism and virile self-assurance.

Is it strange that a handful of bold and sagacious adventurers were able to impose their will over a brave but disunited India? India of the eighteenth century supplies a parallel to Italy of the Renaissance. We are all familiar with the main stages of the English conquest of Bengal, and the consolidation of British influence and administration in Behar, Orissa, and Bengal. Every schoolboy knows the battle of Plassey, the Bengal famine, Warren Hastings' duel with Philip Francis, his struggle with his Council, and the Permanent Settlement of Bengal under Cornwallis. The drama enacted on the battlefield of Plassey, the fierce antagonism and ruthless energy of Hastings and his protagonists have been analysed with consummate ability by passionate partisans. It is a strife of living energies and the momentum of the intense individualities of English and Indian protagonists like Clive and Hyder Ali, Nana Farnavis and Hastings took the form and colour of their environments. The literature on the subject is enormous, and though interest in the dynamic personality of Clive has slackened, Warren Hastings' versatile and mysterious negotiations continue to evoke the passionate devotion of a band of disciplined scholars. Opposition and

criticism of his whole administration alternates with fulsome eulogy and sickly sentimentalism. Cornwallis was destitute of personal qualities which attract a group of ardent admirers, and his solid and prosaic personality lacks the glamour and versatility of his predecessor, and is devoid of the dramatic touch which gives spice and flavour to the stormy proceedings of the period. The party strife in Hastings' Council, while it disturbed their internal repose, sharpened the intellect and developed the personality of the great proconsul. The sources on the period are too well known to need enumeration. The principal authorities consist of the *Proceedings of the Bengal Council and Select Committee*, preserved in duplicate at the Imperial Record Office, and in the India Office Library. There are besides the Clive MSS in possession of Lord Powys, and the Orme MSS which were calendered with exceptional ability by Mr. S. C. Hill. The works of S. C. Hill and Long, Reports of the Committees of Secrecy, and Select Committee are also important. Contemporary tracts by Holwell, Ives Caillaud, Scrafton, Verelst, Watts and others abound. Secondary works by Mill, Dodwell, Forrest, Marshman, Montgomery Martin, Keene are a household word to all students of the period. It

is not the object of this lecture to supply a catalogue of leading works on the period, and every student knows the main authorities. I will content myself with a few general remarks and then point out the problems which face us in the interpretation of the history of this period. We may dismiss as worthless the effusions of persons like Caraccioli whose gross misrepresentation of Clive's character is due to wounded vanity, disappointment and factious opposition. The pamphlets and other contemporary material are a most unsafe guide, as they were written at a time of intense excitement, and reveal not the dispassionate judgment and balanced views of scientific historians, but the warm partisanship of prejudiced authors who had been engaged in the conflicts which they describe with gusto. We are on safer ground when we deal with Mill and the earlier English historians. Mill is cold, precise, pedantic and logical, and applies his Benthamite scissors with a curious mixture of impartiality, prejudice and metaphysics which lift his history above the commonplace. Secluded from the warm air of the Indian sun, and protected from the virus of superiority complex and racialism, he wrote with a detachment and balance which make it a valuable exposition on the doings

of the stormy petrels of the period. Mill, however, did not consult all the essential data and his knowledge of India was derived from books; while his cold, colourless, and dull account lacks light and colour, and his pedestrian style meanders through a wilderness of chaotic details. Governments rise and fall in British India with the swiftness of the Atlantic cyclones, but his fundamental Benthamism which permeates these massive and forbidding volumes remains as solidly fixed as the submarine gold vault of the *Banque de France*. The earlier historians were more impartial and accurate as they narrated the incidents which they had witnessed with singular fidelity and lucidity, and their simple unvarnished accounts have the flavour of a Herodotus. Nobody can read Orme's History without being struck by its epic majesty. Later works by English historians were conceived in the springtide of Kipling's imperialism and tended to become purely propagandist manifestos in which the appetites, sub-conscious impulses and consuming ambition of English heroes were disguised under vast mental construction and clever *apologia*. This curious change in the angle of vision was due to the fact that Indians had begun to study the writings of British

historians of India, and a school of imperial historians had developed in England which, backed by the examples of Carlyle, J. A. Froude and Seeley, found enthusiastic imitators among historians of British India. Their predecessors, such as Macaulay, Mill, Kaye and others were free from the narrow spirit which appears in an intensified form in the last decade of the nineteenth century. I need not name the writers, as students of the period know the writings of this school sufficiently well. It is necessary to mention here the serious harm which such histories have wrought on the scientific study of Indian history. Conscious of the fact that every line will be scanned by intelligent Indians, and inspired by the prevailing doctrine of imperialism which swept over English political life in the last quarter of the XIXth century like a prairie fire on a Canadian farm, the new historians have emerged from their cloisters with laboured explanations, commentaries, and apologia for everything done by their heroes. They have collected and disseminated political resentments, and defended everything done by these pioneers on ground of geographical morality. To them, Clive appears as an embodiment of perfection. His questionable dealings with Aminchand and

others are explained away on the principle of relativity of ethics, and differences in the latitude and longitude of England and India are regarded as an ample justification for flagrant contrasts in morality. The canonisation of Warren Hastings has been effected in an atmosphere of piety and fervour and numerous scribes, of greater and lesser brilliance, have descended upon us with a zeal which invariably outruns their discretion and learning. The subtle, penetrative and elastic spirit of Warren Hastings would have laughed at this attempt by a gregarious band of organisers. Really Hastings' achievements in the United Provinces—Benares, Lucknow, Fyzabad, and Rohilkhand—are as fit objects of praise as the Bengal soil is fit for the cultivation of pine-apples. Such writers on British Indian history are continually flying to extremes that meet at the end of same unexpected rainbow. Besides the voluminous mass of documents preserved in the Home *Miscellaneous Series*, India Office, Vols. 212-221 and 228-234, there are numerous other volumes in the same series. The private papers of Sir Philip Francis are also in the India Office. The printed documents are enormous; and include tracts and contemporary

documents, such as Hickey's *Memoirs*, Hodge's *Travels* etc.

Of modern works we need only mention the names of Beveridge, Busteed, Lawson, Monckton Jones, P. E. Roberts, Stephen, Weitzman, Davies and Strachey. Gleig's *Life* is worthless. Forrest's *Selections from the Letters and Despatches* preserved in the Imperial Record Office initiated the movement for the adoration of Hastings' administration which has produced such a fateful effect on the study of Indian history. Macaulay's eloquence and prejudice had given a highly distorted account of the personality and achievements of a forceful administrator. The new school of imperialism which succeeded Forrest paints Hastings' character in colours so strong and vivid that it is difficult to recognise his likeness.

While Hastings' career and achievements have been vindicated by a succession of able men, the noble work of Edmund Burke for the Indian people is almost forgotten. The intellectual and moral milieu created by the brilliance and splendour of Burke's genius was the motive force of English conservatism. It is, however, forgotten by Indians that Burke was the first great Englishman who broke loose from the

fetters of tradition and prejudice, and devoted seven years of his noble life to the defence of a country which he had never visited, of a people whose ancient traditions and heroic valour roused his warm imagination and acute sensibility to a pitch of enthusiasm. When the achievements of Hastings are chronicled by his fervent admirers, it is meet that one should treasure the life of a man who reached forth across the gulf of prejudice, and created that tradition of English humanitarianism and philanthropy which blossomed forth in the abolition of slavery, and defence of oppressed nationalities. India herself lay exhausted and was then intellectually barren and inert. There were no signs in the eighteenth century of that vigorous revival of her energy which has found perfect expression in her wonderful regeneration in modern times. Though despair of thwarted effort was writ large, the noble Burke ploughed his lonely furrow, amidst the jeers and taunts of jaded lords, and sentimental ladies. He received the help of chivalrous men like Fox, Sheridan, Grey and others, while the malice and ingenuity of Philip Francis, seconded his exertions with all the ardour of concentrated hate. The old man, like a wild boar at bay, struggled heroically, but

the verdict of the lords shattered his hopes and he gave up his work with a cry of despair. He took refuge amidst the shady groves of Beaconsfield, but was pursued in his fastness by the spirit of faction, and the young Duke of Bedford was mean enough to criticise the pension and the title which an ungrateful government had conferred upon the lonely old man.

But Burke, like a sea-lion just turned fifty, whose sensibility had not been blunted nor his senses cloyed, turned furiously upon his pursuers, and penned a diatribe upon the house of Bedford which immediately took rank as a masterpiece of English literature. In his *Letter to a Noble Lord* Burke exposed the hollow foundations of the Russell family and told the story of his failure in a language of concentrated force and power. It is the tragic story recited by Dido to Aeneas of the fall of Troy. The quiet dignity and sustained energy of this modest account of his marvellous work for India are in striking contrast with the blatant threats of Major Scott and the haughty demeanour of Hastings in the House of Lords throughout his trial. Burke remained a passionate fighter till the end, and did not mellow in that soft autumn light in which Sixty looks back on Twenty-five

The speeches on the trial of Hastings deserve study, though I must warn the student to be on his guard, as they are one-sided, emotional and misleading. Burke's biographers, such as Morley, Prior and others have not shown sufficient interest in his selfless work against Hastings, and have dismissed the subject in a few pages. Sir Philip Magnus has supplied a long-felt want by dealing exhaustively with his passionate crusade in his magnificent *Life* published this month. Burke was capable of warmth of passion which exceeded all bounds of good sense, and good breeding. While Chatham gave England an Empire, Burke gave his country the means of conserving it. Had his advice on India been followed in the eighteenth century, our motherland would not have had to go through the travail of disappointment and frustration. His noble work for India has received its due meed of praise after a lapse of one hundred and twenty-five years. Let me quote here one passage from Sir Philip Magnus' book, "The most urgent need of his nature was always some great cause to serve—some monstrous injustice to repair. The appalling abandon with which he flung himself into such causes led him to squander no inconsiderable part

of his magnificent integrity of purpose. But the impression which is left in the mind by Burke's career is not one of vanity or futility; it is rather an impression of wonder at the prodigality of his great gifts, of pity and awe for the manner in which those gifts were sometimes displayed, of pride in the mysterious and terrible potentialities of that human nature of which we all form a part, and which seems in many respects more noble for being shared with him." It must be conceded that Burke's vivid imagination and acute sensibility hurried him into intemperate action and gross abuse of Hastings. His behaviour during the trial lacked dignity and decorum, and the epithets he used against him throw a strange light on his emotional storms and lack of balance. Yet Burke devoted seven years of his noble life to the service of a people who had at the time neither the means nor the capacity to appreciate his selfless endeavour. We have to wade our way through a maze of passionate and partisan speeches and deal in a scientific spirit with problems which threw the most sedate assembly in the world into paroxysms of excitement. The task is infinitely difficult, but it must be faced with a supreme desire for truth. What is our con-

clusion? Clive's administration and character show a certain organic unity and clarity which are legibly stamped on everything he did. There are no tortuous and labyrinthine dealings with mysterious individuals; no suppression of essential information, or manœuvring for position. He dealt with an unprecedented situation in a sledge-hammer style, and instinctively recognised the essential link in a complicated chain of data. We may leave out the Aminchand affair, as it was a serious blot on his reputation, and no historian has attempted its justification. Clive confessed that the Company had no moral position in the province, and his attempt to place its position on a regular basis by securing the Dewanee of Bengal, Behar and Orissa in return for the payment of a tribute of Rs. 26 lakhs to the Emperor is criticised by some historians. The critics seem to ignore the intensity and extent of Mughal influence in Indian society. By this means the Company was able to tide over a period of transition which was peculiarly exposed to attacks of the legitimists in Bengal and Delhi, as Clive thereby accumulated in his despotic individuality the privileges successively acquired by the Subahs, Mughal emperors and English traders in Bengal. This was an excee-

dingly small price to pay for the sovereignty and legal right to a kingdom. Though the Mughal Empire itself was ruined, the shadow of the name of the Mughals still abode with the people of northern India. They had a symbol for their rallying-point, a system of administration which had developed in its palmy days a government with all the effective cohesion of the ant-hill, and concentrated on its objective with a ruthless energy which aroused the wonder and extorted the admiration of foreigners. They had the human touch and instinctive sympathy with the joys and sorrows of the people, and their maxims of administration and monuments of glory have been woven into the fabric of our national life. Clive studied the system in its degenerate days when it had become effete and inert, and had been changed into a Byzantine ceremonialism which made it an object alike of pity and contempt. But it had retained the allegiance of millions in distant provinces which were unacquainted with the convulsions which had destroyed its foundations, and made Delhi in 1750 the legitimate prize of every bold adventurer.

Clive's mistake consisted in the fact that he was content with the work of conquest, and

did not apply himself to the task of administration with zeal and prudence. Mir Jafar's conduct throughout these unsavoury transactions stamps him as one of the most contemptible creatures in the chequered annals of our country. Had Sirajuddaulah shown greater resolution and adopted strong measures, Mir Jafar's conspiracy might have been nipped in the bud. But he lacked sincere advisers, and his inexperience and immaturity ensured his ruin. He is a tragic, lonely and pathetic figure in our history.

Clive's achievement and personality have been discussed threadbare by a host of historians, and Forrest and Dodwell have tried to analyse the period with a certain amount of success. We may dismiss as worthless the malicious gossip of Caraccioli. Malcolm's *Life* may still be read with profit, and Macaulay based his essay on Clive on this work. Mill offers a strong contrast to Forrest, while Dodwell has established a tradition of precise and accurate scholarship which has rehabilitated English historiography. P. E. Roberts has a sound judgment, and his works show a singular detachment and stability amid the flux of English sentiments and feelings. Mervyn Davies has just published a *Life of Clive* which no student

of the period can ignore. He has happily freed himself from the trammels of imperial historians, and has given a scientific account in a work of great industry and sound judgment. While he gives Clive credit for "vigour, enterprise, courage, and self-confidence," he enumerates his vices, which may be summed up as unrestrained egotism producing a voracity for wealth, power and position the like of which has seldom been seen in English history. The Plassey campaign was nothing else but a gambler's throw, and Fortescue admitted in his *History of the British Army* that "the victory may have been easily won." Plassey may be compared to the cannonade of Valmy, which secured a remarkably cheap victory for French revolutionists. Clive's dealings with Aminchand have been condemned by every historian, while his rapacity is reflected in the enormous presents which he extorted after Plassey and the Jagir which he ruthlessly secured for himself. These transactions are sordid, and repulsive to modern eyes and have tarnished his reputation. On the other hand, we cannot help admiring his gallant behaviour when the Bengal civilians mutinied and the wonderful courage he displayed in suppressing the mutiny in the army. Clive was undoubtedly unscrupulous

when his personal advancement and enrichment were concerned, but he stuck tenaciously to certain fundamental principles in the conduct of public business and administration which lift him above a number of selfish, greedy and rapacious opponents who vilified him in India and England. He proved immeasurably superior to them in character, intelligence, patriotism and energy.

Indian historians must change their technique and look at the revolution in Bengal from the point of view of its effects on the prosperity of the province. The criterion which we should adopt in all such cases is the amount, variety and quality of the measures adopted by the new rulers for the amelioration of the condition of the people. Viewed from this point, we must confess that from 1757 to 1770, the annals of Bengal are one long story of mismanagement and ignorance. The miserable province underwent several revolutions during this brief period, and was torn by internal strife. Society was shaken to its foundations, and though Clive has been highly praised for his second administration, there is little evidence of gnomic wisdom or far-sighted statesmanship. It must be conceded that he was primarily a soldier and his second administration is remarkable only for his successful

attempt to maintain law and order in the province. Certainly, this was no mean achievement in a period of swift changes and political cyclones, but Clive was not fitted to take a lead in administrative reforms. He lacked the necessary training and was destitute of the knowledge, experience and ability which Hastings possessed in abundance. He succeeded in taming the rebellious civil and military officers into subjection, and maintaining a semblance of law and order in a devastated and bleeding province. But he failed to undertake the responsibility which had devolved upon the Company after Plassey, and had resource to shifts which were ill-calculated to relieve the miserable peasants of their sufferings. Whatever his apologists and panegyrists might urge, the fact of his failure in administration stares us in the face. The trade of Bengal was thrown into confusion by the action of private traders as well as by the license of the Company's servants, and the social economy of that fair province was dislocated by measures which aggravated the evil. The issue of *Dastuks*, the utter ignorance of the revenue system, the appalling abuse of presents, the destruction of the prestige, authority and position of the *subahdari* of Bengal, the dual system of govern-

ment, and the absence of any effective control over the cupidity and vagaries of the members of the Council brought the province to the verge of bankruptcy. Clive must be given credit for his initiative and boldness in quelling the mutiny of officers, while the rapacity and greed of private traders and Company's servants were controlled and discipline took the place of the mutual repulsions and attractions which had presided over the growth of the Company's influence in Bengal in 1757-1765. Let us cast a pall over a period in which personality was too exacting to admit of hesitation when instinct and appetites were concerned. We see signs of reform after 1770, but in this period of stress and strain the old administration had foundered, and a new one had not been built up in its place. The fragments of Mughal administration and civilisation were neither destroyed nor assimilated, and the crude devices of the new rulers jostled incongruously with the degenerate forms and fantastic ceremonies of Mughal statecraft in its decline. Clive was more impartial in estimate of his work in Bengal than some of his modern champions. It is time that a true picture of this period were painted by a scientific historian, and

the real history of the people of Bengal reconstructed. The ideology of opportunity which has been sanctified by the new school of scholars has produced distorted history, bizarre facts, and perverse interpretations. Indian scholars have not yet investigated this period in sufficient detail, partly because they were afraid of expressing their opinions freely and frankly, and partly because the subject is exceedingly intricate and complicated.

Warren Hastings is an enigmatic figure in Indian history. Burke's vitriolic pen, the prolonged investigation into Hastings' conduct and administration which involved seven years of pitiless dissection, the mass of printed and manuscript material which has reached herculean proportions, the galaxy of brilliant champions who have dwelt fondly on his administration, have lent a peculiar significance to his regime and enveloped his personality in an atmosphere of adoration which few scientific historians have been able to penetrate. Like fossils in geological strata, the names of Nandkumar, Munni Begum, and Wheler survive long after these stormy proceedings have been forgotten, to guide the perplexed student in his reconstruction of a mysterious period. Of Hastings himself we

can form a fairly correct estimate from the writings of the period. His whole administration down to the smallest detail bears the attribute of personality. He was at the head of the vast machine which worked creakily in many parts of India, and it must be confessed that it was his personality which served as a unifying element in a maze of intrigue, vacillation and confusion. With the stones of criticism and the sting of rhetoric, this David went up against the Goliath of his Council, and one by one he slayed or subdued the Philistines. Hastings' warmest admirers have confessed that he must have been an exceedingly difficult man to work with, though to those who submitted to his will and wish, he could be inordinately considerate and condescending. On the other hand his opponents found him to be relentless, vigilant and stubborn, and opposition to his plans spurred him on to appalling activity and ruthless energy.

I cannot deal with the career of a person whose administration became the focus of a fierce campaign and kindled embers of controversy which have not yet been extinguished. Early historians were comparatively free from bias as they did not conceive the possibility of their frank and objective criticism being exploi-

ted by persons for political purposes. Prejudice and interest have proved insuperable barriers in recent times to the scientific evaluation of his work. Hastings' extraordinary capacity for work, his astonishing resource in times of the deepest dejection, his matchless driving power and initiative must be acknowledged by his bitterest opponents. He comes out best in his dealings with the Mahrattas, when he conducted highly complicated and delicate negotiations at a time of imminent peril to his personal safety, with the Bombay Government, Mahadaji Scindia, Fateh Singh Gaekwad, Nana Farnavis, and other powers with a patience, resource, subtlety and tenacity which established British power in Western India on a durable basis. His marvellous powers of organisation were never displayed to greater advantage than in 1780 and 1781. He wove together a network of alliances and negotiations at a time when he was surrounded by the turbulent inhabitants of Benares, and referred with justifiable pride to the "negotiation of peace with Mahadajee Scindia in the most desperate period of my distress". The Treaty of Salbai forms a noble monument to his genius, and is a turning-point in the history of India. Hastings

Charles James Fox

may legitimately claim the fullest credit for this treaty. Again, his organisation of the judiciary in Bengal proved beneficial to the province. He tried to remove abuses, root out corruption, and introduce salutary reform in the earlier period of his regime. He failed in his revenue administration, as it was based on incomplete data, and confessed that he lacked practical working knowledge of the subject. His influence on the formulation of revenue policy was disastrous, and his incapacity to use the advice of his subordinates better qualified than himself was the necessary result of his curious flair for experimentation and his despotic temperament. His revenue scheme of 1772 failed as signally as his scheme of 1776, and the condition of the peasantry deteriorated considerably. The voluminous material preserved in the Proceedings of the *Committees of Circuit and Revenue*, 1772-1774, and 1774-1781, in the Government of India and Bengal Records are conclusive on three points. (1) Hastings made a profound mistake in his attempt to eliminate the Zemindars and the *Kanungos*. These two functionaries were the pivot of the whole system, and it took him several years before he found out their real

position in the social economy of the province. He was obliged to restore them to their original position, but, by that time, considerable mischief had been done. (2) In the second place, he was too fond of secretariat schemes and imposed his theories on the country without due regard to local conditions and experience. (3) Lastly he ignored the rights not merely of the Zemindar and the Kanungo but also of the peasant. Hastings attempted to redress the balance in the last stages of his regime, but it was not till 1786 that the new reforms took the realities of the situation into account. It is impossible to deal minutely with the various stages through which his revenue policy passed, as works on the subject abound and Ramsbotham, Firminger, and the voluminous material preserved in the Fifth Report of 1812 and others have dealt with it at considerable length. Hastings had a curious fondness for new ideas and grandiose schemes, and had a fascination for ambitious projects and glittering designs. His was a mind of singular plasticity, leaping with eagerness at bold schemes and devising ingenious methods for their execution. It is impossible to deal adequately with Hastings' relations with Oudh, his treatment of the Rohillas and Chait Singh

of Benares, and the trial of Nand Kumar. The more these matters are studied, the clearer is the impression that Hastings' conduct was marked by injustice, and a disregard of the elementary canons of prudence which justified Edmund Burke's tremendous indictment. That Hastings approved of the treatment meted out to the Begums, nay encouraged the Resident to resort to it, so as to extort money from them, is undoubted. On the Rohilla War, Strachey has tried an *apologia*. But he starts with a fixed prejudice against the entire body of Rohillas and then goes on to defend Hastings. This is not history, but special pleading. On the Nand Kumar trial, there are several significant omissions in Sir James Stephen's elaborate work which throw a curious light on Hastings' devious methods. The infliction of death penalty on Nand Kumar was undoubtedly harsh, and even Sir James Stephen is forced to admit that if he had to depend upon the evidence for the prosecution, he would not have condemned him. It was Hastings' duty to pardon a person condemned under such circumstances, and his cruelty was shown in the attempt of his Italian agent named Belli to prevent Farrer from presenting a petition for a reprieve for Nand

Kumar. Philip Francis and his associates also acted in a cowardly manner, but Francis justified his shameful conduct on the ground that he and his associates were afraid of their lives owing to the pronounced hostility of the Judges. Hastings' intimacy with Impey exposed the latter to justifiable suspicions and Impey's behaviour at the trial of Nand Kumar, his extraordinary proceedings in Oudh, after the persecution of the Begums, his acceptance of the pay of Sadar Dewani Adalat, and other measures tend to confirm the impression that Impey was sometimes influenced by Hastings in the discharge of his duties.

The time has now arrived when an impartial estimate of Hastings' character should be attempted by Indian historians. This grave little man, with a somewhat unhappy mouth and a determined chin, had a comprehensive and encyclopaedic mind. The intensity of its force in one sphere is less remarkable than its suitableness for all. He had the consciousness of young and potent energy within him, and was gifted with an individuality too paramount for the creation of more than mighty experiments in revenue administration, and the Bengal judiciary. Burke's intellect was of a different order. He

had the unique faculty of translating thought and feeling into form and his sensitive susceptibility and quickness of sympathy were penetrated through and through with a specific quality. To sum up, Burke's intellect was essentially plastic, while Hastings' was distinguished for a variety of acquirements, a largeness of intelligence, and a stark realism which invariably exposed him to the charge of double-dealing. Macaulay's passionate indictment was marred by his violent prejudices and strong dislikes, and later researches have conclusively shown that his estimate of Warren Hastings was unjust. But the pendulum has now swung to the other extreme and a perennial stream of laudatory works has flooded the market. Many works have been composed by historians, who are more distinguished for their enthusiasm than for their knowledge of the period, and the scientific study of history has been lost sight of in the eager pursuit of hero worship. Some recent historians have passed their judgment upon data that would be insufficient in the case of an anæmic typist, just emerging from an unrequited passion for the cashier.

Cornwallis' character and administration do not call for any extended comment. His was a well-knit massive personality, rugged,

simple, honest and direct. His high social position freed him from irritating and vexatious quarrels with members of his own Council, and he could, owing to the amendment of the Regulating Act, take an independent and strong line of his own. I do not propose to deal with his proposals for a permanent settlement, as they are familiar to every student of history, nor can I go into the details of his measures for the reform of services. His most questionable act was the exclusion of Indians from all positions of trust or responsibility. It was fraught with the most serious consequences to the history of this country and sowed the seed of misunderstanding and suspicion between the two races. The virtual exclusion of Indians from responsible positions produced a gulf which was widened by the victories of the Company in Upper India and the Deccan. The conquests of Wellesley and Hastings created a strong reaction against Indian customs and manners while the creation of a new aristocracy by Cornwallis, which became the governing class in the country, intensified the racial cleavage between the rulers and the ruled. A superiority complex now developed among the Company's servants who regarded India as a country "whose institutions were corrupt

and the people corrupted." The great reservoir of kindness and good-will which could have been tapped by men of the type of Munro, Malcolm, and Metcalfe, who lived among the people and worked for them, was not utilised by Cornwallis. The period 1786-1805 is one of internal consolidation and territorial aggrandisement, and the two together laid the foundation of British progress in India in the nineteenth century. Very few historians have studied the working of the crude experiments in the building up of an efficient bureaucracy instituted in the year 1757-1785, or studied the disastrous effects of secretariat schemes which were enforced by people who were destitute of ability, experience and training. The servants of the Company who carried out these half-baked schemes were mostly youngmen who had chosen a commercial career and had received no training in administration. There was a flood of adventurers in India who came here to find employment, and carve out a career. They came with strong recommendations and many an administrator in India was pestered by Directors to find jobs for gentlemen who had proved hopeless misfits in their homeland. Cornwallis lodged a strong protest against these practices,

and there was a substantial reduction after 1790 but the mischief had been done, and Bengal became the receptacle for persons who had proved failures in their own country. Both these evils were avoided by Cornwallis, and he built up a service, and elaborated an administrative code, which are his chief claims to remembrance. Had he shown more liberality and acted with vision and imagination, he might have been able to build up an Indian governing class *pari passu* with the English bureaucracy which would have proved beneficial to India. His narrow outlook and blurred vision were expressed in measures which perpetuated racial distinctions and shut Indians out from every avenue of responsible employment. His refusal to listen to Sir John Shore's advice, and fix a permanent settlement of land revenue after an elaborate and exhaustive enquiry, has been the subject of acute controversy, but the view which finds currency among all modern historians is that Cornwallis was precipitate in his policy, and tilted the scales heavily in favour of Zemindars. I do not wish to discuss Wellesley's policy regarding the Nizam and the Mahrattas, as the subject is so vast that it requires a volume, and the material is enormous. Mr. P. E. Robert's study of Wel-

Wellesley is an impartial and objective study, though it leaves out certain elements of his policy which need emphasis. Wellesley's character is a curious compound of vanity, genuine ability, tremendous initiative and ruthless energy. He had a single-track mind, and refused to project himself into the feelings of others and assess these feelings at their due weight. He had come to expand British power, increase British prestige and enhance British influence. Considered solely from the point of British interests Wellesley was a phenomenal success. He refused to listen to the representations of parties whom he had decided to bring into his Subsidiary Alliance and clinched every argument by resort to force. It must be admitted that Wellesley's argument proved invariably decisive and succeeded at an enormous cost in building up a secure position in India. If we look at the position from a higher plane, and take into account the feelings of the states which joined his network of treaties, the problem wears a different aspect. While Wellesley was perfectly justified in restoring the old Hindu dynasty of Mysore, his action against the Nawab of Carnatic was highly inexpedient and utterly unjustified. He cast aside the

bonds which had united that family to the British by indissoluble links and decreed the annexation of his territory in a proclamation which is unprecedented for the virulence of its language and the vehemence of its invective. There is no more sordid chapter in the whole history of modern India than the clandestine negotiations, intrigues and arrangements which the Company's servants in Madras conducted with Muhammad Ali. Burke undoubtedly exaggerated the Nawab's influence in Madras and England in his speech on the Nawab of Arcot's debts, but his analysis of the impecunious Nawab's colossal debt is a formidable indictment of an appalling system. Wellesley's dealings with the Nawab Vizier of Oudh show precisely the same tendency, and the Nawab's territories barely escaped confiscation. He treated the Indian princes with a mixture of haughtiness and contempt which must have produced a feeling of consternation among the objects of his anger and scorn. Wellesley trained a fine set of administrators who carried out his policy and perpetuated his traditions by the vigour and energy of their character, and the sympathy and understanding of the Indian people. His vigorous personality

was stamped on everything he undertook, though it brought him into frequent collisions with his employers. This giant Blunderbore, who carved out a mighty empire in India and secluded himself from the vulgar gaze of his inferiors by resorting to a formidable icy decorum and frigid scorn subsided into a disappointed, morose old gentleman in England.

We need not go through the reign of his successors in detail. India had not recovered her national consciousness, and the country was a prey to internecine strife and disorganisation. Clive had stated in a despatch, dated December 30, 1758, that "the Indian soldier, if he deserves that name, has not the least attachment to his Prince; he only expects service from those who pay them best, but it is a matter of profound indifference to them whom they serve." Society in India had been reduced to its elements, and the sentiment of national patriotism had not yet developed. India was cut up into fragments which were rigid, inflexible, and mutually destructive, and national patriotism was not even dreamt of. The sentiment of nationality and the pride and glory of conquest which had inspired the Mahratta arms in the days of their splendour had considerably diminished, though patriotic

sentiment still clustered round the Peshwa in Poona, and in times of crisis a number of Mahratta rulers looked to him for lead and guidance. The Pindarees looted and destroyed with complete impartiality, and were deterred from their activities only by fear. Theoretically they respected the territories of their patrons, in actual practice they worked havoc in all the provinces through which they passed. Lord Hastings' *Journal* graphically describes the hopes and fears of a Viceroy whose comprehensive plans were conceived in collaboration with Metcalfe and were executed with mechanical precision by persons who had undergone rigid training, and served a very hard period of political apprenticeship. We lack detailed and comprehensive history of India during the first half of the XIXth century. It offers great scope and opportunity to the student, as the material has not been properly tapped, and only a few full-length biographies of the leading actors have been published. Prinsep's history is a solid piece of work, in which the achievements of Hastings are chronicled in a simple and direct style. Malcolm, Grant-Duff and other contemporary writers have become a classic and are familiar to all students. Modern research seems

to have ignored the fascinating campaigns against the Gurkhas and the intricate and complicated negotiations which Metcalfe conducted with the Rajput and other states with such conspicuous success. Kaye's and Thompson's *Lives of Metcalfe* bring out the valuable work done by that great statesman, while one or two works on Hastings' relations with Indian States which have been recently published add to our information. But the subject needs a detailed and elaborate study, and it is to be hoped that some historian will supplement the information which the laborious researches of Grant-Duff and Kincaid and Parasanis have placed at our disposal. It is a story worth telling, as it shows an exceedingly clear grasp of the political situation in India by Hastings. If we leave out the Gurkha War and concentrate on Hastings' later achievements, we trace the evolution of his policy by stages each of which appears to be the logical result of the stage preceding it. His negotiations with Rajputana States were an indispensable preliminary to his campaign against the Pindaris, while his comprehensive plans against the Mahrattas were the necessary consequences of his vigorous move against the Pindarees. The one flows irresistibly out of the other. There is no hiatus

in the development of his programme. Hastings' methods against the Company's opponents are a repetition of Wellesley's tactics. He brushed aside all opposition by the vigour, promptness and brilliance of his strokes, and forestalled possible opposition by a combination of tact, diplomacy and force which proved irresistible. A man of a singularly calm and shrewd judgment, he rarely failed to secure an object on which he had set his heart. The worst aspect of his character comes out in his dealings with Metcalfe over the affairs of Palmer & Co. That tarnished his glory and left a residue of bitterness between the two men which proved a serious obstacle to Metcalfe's career in India.

I do not wish to deal with the history of India after Lord Hastings in detail, as fierce controversies have raged over certain measures, and an impartial and detached view is impossible. Lord William Bentinck's administration offers a wide scope for the social history of India. The social reforms of this enlightened Governor which conferred a boon on India, and set her pace steadily towards the west, sowed the seed of Indian Renaissance which followed half a century later. Bentinck gave expression to his genuine sympathy with aspirations of Indians in his

appointment of Indians to relatively responsible positions, while in social intercourse with Indians he relaxed the rigid restrictions which impeded free and frank intercourse between the two races. His educational policy has aroused bitter comments in one group and enthusiastic praise in the other, but a closer study of his measures will convince any one that he was not opposed to cultivation of Oriental languages in indigenous institutions. India has undoubtedly gained by the wise policy which Bentinck introduced, though opinions differ as to the extent of the benefit. Auckland's regime was a period of gloom and consistent failure and he displayed in his dealings with Oudh, the Afghans, and the Amirs of Sind a species of double dealing and *supressio veri* which justly exposed him to the charge of vacillation and dishonesty. His negotiations with the Ameers of Sind have not yet been adequately dealt with. The more we study his regime, the greater is our conviction that Auckland's vacillation, his devious ways and questionable transactions ensured the failure of his plans from the outset. The Afghan War need not detain us. Sir John Kaye's classical work on the First Afghan War has not yet been superseded, but we lack the Afghan version of the

story. Besides the *Political Proceedings of the Government of India* at the India Office and the Imperial Record Office, there are the *Ellenborough Papers* in the Public Record Office, and the *Auckland and Broughton Papers* in the British Museum. The number of contemporary publications is large and includes works by Havelock, Outram, Malcolm, Vincent Eryre, Burnes and others. Durand published a work on the subject in 1879, and others followed suit. It is best to draw a pall over a record of tragedy, timidity and vacillation, and deal with a period in which positive achievements and solid results can be recorded. As a result of Auckland's foolish policy, Afghanistan was knit up into a compact and united country, and Dost Muhammad came back to his people amidst universal rejoicings. The Government of India were obliged to follow the principle of neutrality in Afghan affairs, and the sound advice of Lord Lawrence on this issue proved the salvation of British position in Afghanistan. Lytton departed from this principle with disastrous results, and the one great lesson which the Afghan War taught to the people was an adaptation of the old maxim "Live and let live." The Frontier Pathan carried on his raid with his customary skill and intrepidity.

dity, and went on repeating his proverb—A moon-light night is my daughter's dowry. This was not followed in the case of Sind, and Outram was perfectly justified in lodging his emphatic protests against Ellenborough's high-handed action and chivalrously refusing his share of the prize-money. The subject needs further elucidation, as we have unfortunately little material on the history of Sind for several centuries before British occupation. After the conquest of the province by Muhammad bin Qasim, Sind relapsed into obscurity and historians of India have rarely noticed its development. Sind needs a comprehensive history, and though Sir Richard Burton, Burnes, Outram, Pottinger and others have dealt with the pre-British period, and the Ellenborough Papers at the Public Record Office are a mine of information on British policy in Sind, the history of that outpost in the intervening period is little known. Histories of a sort exist, but very few reliable and comprehensive treatises have yet been published. Sindhi scholars should wipe out this blot on their fair province, and throw light on the relations of Sind with Persia, Afghanistan, Simla and the Sikhs. The Bombay Record Office has published some useful memoirs on Shikarpur and the Jagirs in

Sind, but we need well-documented history of the province as a whole.

The Sikh Wars evoked great interest in India and England, and the martial ardour of the gallant Sikh soldier, his indomitable courage and devotion to his cause showed the enormous difference between a national army and an army of mercenaries. Had Sikh leadership been able and incorruptible, the fight would have been still more desperate, and the issue would undoubtedly have hung in balance, though the ultimate victory of British arms was never in doubt. The campaigns against the Sikhs read like an epic, and the appalling losses on both sides testified to the reckless courage of the participants in this titanic struggle. Cunningham is regarded as the chief historian of the Sikh Wars, but he had neither the opportunity to consult the original materials nor the inclination to carry on a sustained and laborious inquiry. He had vision, imagination and sympathy, and these outstanding qualities, which mark him out from a host of other writers, will ensure the popularity and utility of the work. The Punjabees have already done good spade-work on the history of their province, and Sita Ram Kohli and others have written admirable articles on the army of Ranjit Singh in the *Journal of Indian*

History. The Punjab Government Records which have been published include important material relating to the Delhi Residency and Agency, 1807-1857; the *Ludhiana Agency* 1808-1815, and the *Lahore Political Diaries*, 1847-9. *The Political Proceedings* of the Government of India are not yet accessible to the student, and we have to eke out our knowledge from secondary works like A. D. Innes, Griffin, Smythe, Edwards, the Lawrences and others. I may here refer particularly to the *History of the Punjab* by Saiyad Muhammad Lateef. It incorporates a number of Persian histories and is partly the result of discussions with persons who had taken part in the war. It is not authoritative and is badly arranged, but it is a mine of information on the subject. The Sikhs, like the Turks, have been very chary of recording their exploits in massive folios, and we owe our information on the salient features of their administration to observers and travellers who have left vivid accounts of Ranjit Singh's court. Readers who wish to study this subject further may read my Presidential Address delivered at Maharaja Ranjit Singh Centenary Celebrations on July 27, 1939, at Cawnpore, and published in a

Souvenir Volume by the organisers of the Centenary. They will find references to authorities for the period.

I need say little about Dalhousie or the Indian Mutiny. Everyone knows the essential links in the chain of his policy, and everyone admits that the Mutiny was due to a great extent to his desire to abolish territories of rulers who had been in alliance with the Company for a considerable time. The psychological effects of his policy on the classes and masses of India have not been objectively studied. That it produced a profound impression in the country and shook the faith of the Princes in the sanctity of their treaties and solemn pledges is evident to all who have gone through the history of that stormy period; nor can it be gainsaid that Dalhousie's ideology and the firm hold which his theories, prejudices, and passions exercised on the conception of his plans and his relations with his subordinates determined the direction and affected the volume of the fierce opposition which took such a hideous form in the Indian Mutiny. I will not deal with this period, as it has become so hackneyed and commonplace that it need not be referred to here. Had Dalhousie enjoyed good health and moved about

freely among different classes of his subjects, he might have modified his views and changed his dictatorial methods and inflexible resolve. But he was a sick man when he came to India, and he never enjoyed good health during his residence in this country. He suffered excruciating pains at a time when he was called upon to take momentous decisions, and the slightest opposition to his plans threw him into paroxysm of frenzy. His annexation of the Punjab was justified, but his doctrine of lapse, his indifference to the feelings of Princes who were injuriously affected by his policy, the mechanical precision which he insisted on the execution of his orders, alienated him from the masses of the people of India as well as from the influential elements of the land. It was a pathetic sight to watch the relentless way in which he executed his designs, at a time when he knew that his health was deteriorating and his end would not be far off.

A most conscientious Governor-General, disciplined by the stern puritanism of Scotland and endowed with the finest intellect, he failed because he neglected the human element in his policy, and converted the whole country into a machine which he worked with the

pitiless monotony of a pneumatic drill. Opinions, feelings and sentiments were cast aside as irrelevant to the main consideration—the efficiency of the machine. The post-Mutiny period witnessed the growth of the Indian Civil Service, the development of self-governing institutions, the emergence of Indian nationalism and Indian Renaissance, and the organisation of political agitation for constitutional reforms. The Englishmen who came out to India after 1860 differed from their predecessors in their outlook, temperament, and training, and left the tradition of Malcolm and Munro far behind. They were intellectually better equipped than their predecessors, and their brilliance and ability were expressed in the material development of the country. They undertook the construction of roads, railways, posts and telegraphs, and gave a great impetus to the material progress of India. But they remained stubbornly aloof from the main stream of Indian life and thought, and the gulf was considerably widened. Social intercourse was rare, and the administration remained out of touch with the people for whom it was designed. The Government performed its customary functions with admirable promptitude and vigour, and main-

tained law and order, constructed roads and railways with exemplary zeal and ability. This work was an indispensable preliminary to India's economic progress, but the growing mass of Indian intelligentsia had remained distant and aloof, and as a measure of their failure to win over the middle classes, the rulers emphasised their special interest in the Indian peasantry. There was little justification for these claims, as the Taluqdars and Zemindars were the special favourites of the government, and it required the logic of William Ockham and the ingenuity of a Jesuit casuist to reconcile the conflicting claims of these classes upon the patronage of an irresponsible government. The interests of the tenants and zemindars by a benign government which claimed to safeguard both classes were obviously irreconcilable, but attempts were sincerely made to adjust these differences. Several important consequences flowed irresistibly from this attitude. The breach between the two people had now considerably widened, and Indians had begun to think for themselves in the realms of art and culture, administration and politics. The feeling of self-complacency which had acted as a strong cohesive principle among the Indian intellectuals who had received English education in England

and India had tended to create a distinctive class of intelligentsia saturated with the traditions of the West and not only ignorant of their national culture and historical movements but contemptuous of its influence and indifferent to its claims. The material progress of India was rapid enough to arouse the comment and excite the admiration of observers, but it went hand in hand with a deterioration in our fibre and a relaxation of our national discipline which threatened to sap our vitality and undermine our solidarity. The history of India under the British rule in 1757-1860 had been a history of the Company's administration, which conquered territories, formulated and executed law, developed its economic resources, and ruled it in accordance with its conception of efficiency. From 1870 onward, *pari passu* with the growth of administration, we have new forces at work, new energy pulsating our people, and new aspirations inspiring this great continent. We have yet to trace the history of the Indian Renaissance and the history of our political endeavour and agitation with insight and sympathy. The era of peaceful progress through which India passed after 1860, has been briefly traced in the colourless biographies and memoirs

of the period. Northbrook and Elgin, Dufferin and Lansdowne succeeded each other in an atmosphere of frigid tranquillity and bucolic self-sufficiency. We have, of course, the *Parliamentary Papers* of the period and the biographies, the contemporary documents and the secondary works which are familiar to students of modern India. The Government during this period was essentially of the type called by the Germans, the Police State, when its functions were confined to the maintenance of law and order and the barest necessities of life. Soon, however, India began to march with rapid strides and Indian industry began to rear its head, while economic nationalism took root in a land which had been distinguished for the exquisite workmanship of its craftsmen and the variety and fertility of its soil. Indian industry was hampered by restrictions imposed upon it for various reasons, and Indian capitalists were confronted by forces of exploitation which impeded their activities and rendered it difficult for them to make any leeway. Though self-governing institutions had made considerable progress, the exclusion of Indians from the Government administration and legislation of their country kept Indians in a state of depen-

dence and impotence. Two great movements now emerged in India which vitalised our people, and inspired them with fresh hope and confidence. The progress of Vernaculars, the growth of reforming movements, such as the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj, the increasing interest in the indigenous arts and crafts are an expression of the new forces which deeply moved the new generation in India. Indian nationalism took its rise at a time when the people were excluded from all share in the administration of their country, and had no opportunity of serving their motherland in positions of trust and responsibility. It was not till 1892 that Indians were able to ventilate their grievances in Provincial and Central Legislatures through their representatives. Further progress was made in 1907 and 1919, but the pace was exceedingly slow, and high offices were still barred to the intelligentsia until the Act of 1919 did bare justice to their claims, and assigned certain proportions in Imperial Services. Ripon's Viceroyalty marks a turning-point in the growth of modern India, and the foundation of the Indian National Congress heralded a new era in the history of our political progress. The establishment of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh by Sir Saiyad

Ahmad Khan ushered in a period of educational activity among Muslims. By the end of the XIXth century India was able to march forward in a spirit of self-assurance, and was launched on her career of victory. New India is the result of numerous forces which have united in a powerful stream and have fertilised soil of Indian administration.

I have given here a summary of the chief movements in India which will repay study and investigation. Students of modern India are beset by many pitfalls and unless they keep certain principles clearly in view, they are liable to form a blurred and partial view of the history of the period. We have, of course, voluminous material on the history of Indian people from 1757 onwards. We must pay our humble meed of praise to the band of Mahratta scholars in Poona, who have reconstructed the history of the Mahrattas by their patient labour and disciplined enthusiasm. No praise is too great for a pioneer like Rajwade who devoted his life to this sacred task. The Peshwa's *Daftar* has placed at the disposal of students a collection of records which are of the highest value to scholars. The enthusiasm of Professor D. V. Potdar has infused fresh energy into his work. He is one of the

most striking pioneers of historical research in the Maharashtra and his selfless work and devotion to the *Bharat Itihas Mandal* have laid Indian scholars under a deep debt of gratitude. Bengal and the Punjab have followed suit, but it must be admitted that a great deal of spade work has to be done in these provinces, and a large amount of manuscript material awaits expert investigation. Modern India must be studied with great caution, as the nearer we approach the present times, the greater is the temptation to mix up history with politics. Scientific history is impossible in an atmosphere surcharged with passion, and scholars must tread cautiously when they deal with problems which are the catchwords of political parties. There is a variety of material on the subject, but primary sources and original authorities are not available to the students. So far as the study of contemporary India is concerned, the doors of Record Offices are practically sealed for the earnest inquirer, and though political organisations published their resolutions, the real reasons for their policy and programme are not always published in the press. The motive for these measures may be entirely different from the arguments which are ostentatiously paraded before the public,

and we have to wait for a considerable period before the secrets of Government Departments and political parties are revealed. The regimes of Ripon and Curzon, Irwin and Willingdon are a fascinating subject of research, but to those who have taken any share in the public life of their country, it is clear that the real authorities for this period are beyond the reach of the scholar, for if they were made accessible they would produce a conflagration in India. Hence all that the student of modern period (1860-1938) can do is to study dispassionately such material as is available at the present time and arrive at tentative conclusions. The politician is in a different condition. He must mould his material to suit his political creed, and he will naturally eliminate everything that does not fit in with his prejudices and formulæ. The historian, on the other hand, must perform the function of a judge, and base his conclusions on all the available documents. He has no theories and no prepossessions. He does not, of course, start with a blank mind. He has his environment, his training, his temperament and his habits as the starting point. He cannot divest himself of his personality which is moulded by these factors. But he should try

to deal with each question with an open mind, in a calm and cool spirit, immune from the war cries of the politician and the special pleadings of the partisan. His first most important stage is the collection and examination of sources. Unless this indispensable step is taken, his research will be worthless and his history will be a curious amalgam of fiction, prejudice, passion and interest. The next step is the deduction of conclusions, and formation of sound judgment on the material which has been carefully sifted and scientifically analysed. Every historical work must be permeated by scientific spirit and must be free from racial prejudice and religious intolerance. The task of a historian is sacred. He cannot and ought not to prostitute his ability, his knowledge and his experience to the gratification of an over-mastering passion, such as fanaticism or the satisfaction of personal aggrandisement and interest. If he performs his duties faithfully and paints a true picture of the history of our homeland, he will succeed in assuaging religious feelings and consolidating the forces of our unity. Indian historiography has not yet made rapid progress, as temptations to partiality and exaggeration in a country like India, with its clash of races and interests is very

serious. A historian of India has to divest himself of his national and religious characteristics before he can deal scientifically with issues which have divided nations, and organised parties in armed camps. The signs of a revival in the history of our motherland are hopeful, and a genuine attempt should now be made to reconstruct it on scientific lines. While I have the greatest admiration and respect for the work of historians, both Indian and English, who have published their studies on the period, I am enforced to point out that some of the existing works are vitiated by the narrow outlook and fixed prejudices of the writers. I am forced to add that some of the writers, impregnated with the prejudices of their race, have proved incapable of ascending to the truth, and have proved singularly unsuccessful to read the deepest lessons of past history. History is not merely a study of the documents; it involves also deep study of the sub-conscious impulses of the age. Hitler's wonderful progress in modern times is due to the fact that he is continuously appealing to the impulses of the German people. It may be said of the Indian people, what a recent writer has said about the people of England, that they are like a fine and nervous horse which,

ridden with good heart, can surmount any obstacles but which, when out of sympathy with a timid rider, will shy at the shadow of an ice-cream cart, or the distant growling of a daschund. Documents are essential for objective history, but the mystical qualities of a born leader cannot be deciphered from moth-eaten documents and mouldy parchments. A historian must possess not merely the technical equipment which is requisite for his work but also broad commonsense, the mental soundness and the humane instinct which give freshness and fertility to the most insignificant incident. The real leader must possess—as many Indian heroes have possessed in abundance,

The Monarch mind, the mystery of commanding,
 The birth-hour gift, the art Napoleon
 Of welding, moulding, gathering, wielding, bending
 The hearts of thousands till they moved as one.

We need a history, not merely of the lives and thoughts of those who worked the administrative machinery, but also of the feelings and sentiments of the people who were profoundly affected by the machine. A scientific history does not mean a “national” history of India. It means a history based strictly on materials

which will illustrate the working of national mind in different spheres, and its expression in the realms of art, administration, culture and morality. Such a history of India has yet to be written. Let us hope that the new spirit of heroic endeavour and virile self-assurance which animate the country at the present time will result in the publication of a scientific history of India.

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